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Statement for Appropriations Committee Public Hearing February 17, 2017

Regarding H.B. 7027, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

Senator Formica, Senator Osten, Representative Walker and other members of the committee:

My name is Melissa Mason, and I am the Executive Director of New Haven Works. New Haven Works is the result of a grassroots public mandate to address a jobs crisis in the city of New Haven, where in some neighborhoods 40% of the residents were un- or under-employed, despite the fact that our core industries – particularly healthcare and education – were expanding. It was the culmination of a two-year multi-stakeholder process, involving public hearings, a collaboration between the public and private sectors, and union, community, and business groups, to move residents into good jobs and provide job-ready applicants for local employers. New Haven Works seeks to:

1. Build a talent pool for regional businesses by recruiting, preparing, and screening City of New Haven residents for available jobs in growth occupations.
2. Collaborate on career pathways in educational services, healthcare, and construction to meet employer demand for a skilled workforce
3. Create access to regional jobs for city residents by collaborating with partner and participating employers to ensure that local residents successfully navigate pathways to employment.

New Haven Works is an implementing partner for Yale University's three-year commitment to hire 1,000 New Haven residents, and works closely with major employers, including Yale-New Haven Hospital, United Illuminating, Frontier Communications, and over fifty other local employers on developing effective pathways into well-paying growth jobs.

Since we opened our doors in June 2013, have placed over 950 city residents into jobs (including over 300 at Yale University, one of the region's most competitive employers) and by this Spring, we expect to have placed 1,000 New Haven residents into jobs. That's 1,000 families with more stable economic futures – strengthening the neighborhoods in which they reside.

As a primary partner in helping Yale achieve its local hiring goal, New Haven Works will place hundreds of more residents into high-paying and secure jobs over the next two years. Just to reiterate New Haven Works will have placed 1,000 residents by this Spring, and with Yale's commitment our placement rate will increase over the next two years.

With our success, the demand for our services continues to grow, which is pushing our capacity beyond its limits. Every month we conduct an orientation for new members, and every month the line for this orientation becomes longer. Even on cold winter days, New Haven residents show up early in the morning to secure a place in line, and at least twice as many people show up than we can admit into our orientations.

The State of Connecticut has been and will continue to be absolutely vital for this work. By restoring the full funding stream to New Haven Works recommended by the Department of Labor, the Appropriations Committee would help ensure that qualified New Haven residents have access to good jobs across the city and enable our progress towards improving the lives of people in New Haven and achieving long-term economic stability in the city.

